Memoria Beata.

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C. S. P.,

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BY
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I.

In every heart a long-closed chamber stands
Wherein we fear to look, where humbly bows each head,
Whose gates we open with reluctant hands
And gaze with sorrow on our old selves—dead:

There lie lost dreams of our soul's first fair lands
There lie lost hopes o'er which, if we but think
Of that dread chamber opened by strange hands,
The old pangs rend us and our scarred hearts sink:

For we, untrue to all our early dreams
Let sordid cares on heavenly themes encroach
Till wraith-like statues melt in ghostly gleams;
Each a lost self, with face of mute reproach:

Scarred, changed, defaced from all our hope and youth
Transmitted vice and self-invited sin
Have wrought this havoc—till we cry in ruth,
This, what I am! This—what I might have been!

II.

So do I dream of all the dear, dead time
When hand in hand together we had been,
Then couldst thou tune me to thy heavenly chime
Unfolding glories of the love unseen.

Hope's sun, that once lit all my fairy towers
In those bright days when blest I walked with thee
Shines, since you soared to fairer worlds than ours
Through cloud and darkness o'er a sullen sea.

Friends whisper, "Peace!" yet in my heart sharp swords
Smite thro' their feeble words a blow swift driven;
She is in Peace, and yet I cry wild words:-
"If we are parted can her Heaven be Heaven?

Where art thou now O Friend, O Lover—all?
Breathest thou fond airs of some heavenly clime,
Hearest thou pitying to my sorrow's call,
Or art thou lost to Life and Love and Time?

I quest of Death, I dully quest of Life,
I wonder whither is our aimless course:
If we have haven after our short strife,
Find we in Death oblivion or worse?"

Men strove for answer since the world's first youth
And grew to larger stature in the strife,
For Doubt was ever nurse to nobler Truth,
And out of suffering comes the soul's best life:

From clouds of Doubt streamed brighter rays of thought
Lighting the path for others' Faith and Deed;
Yet what of them who in the darkness wrought
Dying in birth-throes of the nobler creed?

To them no light, to them no blessed hope
To meet the friends in former days held dear:
Walking in darkness ever, must they grope
And questioning hover 'twixt their faith and fear;

For none can tell; past those dread Iron Gates
Our tear-blurred eyes are mocked by rayless gloom;
Faith with Despair all equal by them waits,
Sinner and sinless share a common doom.

III.

So must they weep, who'er would serve for Truth—
That bitter Teacher, bringing blood-bought good,
She slays her priests nor ever thinks of ruth
Till fiery links unite her brotherhood:

Her Court a prison and her crown—of thorns,
Her path, the path by anguished martyrs trod;
Still she proclaims, instructs and comforts, warns,
And at her altar serves the most high God:

For God at His right hand holds Absolute Truth
And nearest lies His gift, that Truth to search,
And we must seek, thro' blood and tears in sooth,
Thro' blinded gropings, thro' all Creed and Church,

Nor end the search while yet Earth-bound we dwell
And in that search our finite natures own;
Her awful splendors mortals may not tell:
Truth Absolute, O God, is Thine alone!

Eternity itself is not too long
For our young souls to reach their perfect growth,
To learn in schools of suffering to be strong
And make us living lights of perfect Truth.

O thou, who reached the land of Faith's sweet rest
Thro' Doubt's dark road and waters of Despair,
How shall I reach that country ever blest
In the calm regions of the upper air?

I cannot pray, I have no life, no thought,
Naught but one wish to tell me that I live—
To see thy face, could that dear boon be bought
My hope of Heaven I would gladly give

IV.

Yet 'tis but Hope that whispers to our trust,
Tho' faltering Reason may not give assent,
"Something remains beyond the fleeting dust
When the short fever of our life is spent;

Something too great for Earth's contracted stage
Too large to write its final record here,
Needing another world, a wider age,
A longer lesson and a nobler sphere;

The soul must heed the law of growth divine
While the frail body mingles with the sod
Till inward Truth, and Grace, its outward sign,
Stamps it the image of its Maker—God."

—A faltering hope, close mingled with despair
A faltering hope with heaviest fear alloyed
That all my cry falls on the empty air,
And all that other world is soundless void;

Yet through long days thou callest from afar
Through the long nights Love lights with glowing flame,
Through the long years thou shinest from thy star,
What matters Time if Love be still the same?

V.

As some poor seamstress binds, with far-away
And sad, sweet thoughts upon the lengthening seam,
I link my chain and bind up with each day
Some cherished fragment of our dear lost dream.

How could I raise mine Earth-bound eyes to thee,
Thou lily in God's garden of pure souls?
—My love, my love! Mine all-sufficient plea
Still wrings my heart and still my heart controls.

I was not fit to win thy white soul's love
And when thou stooped from thy most high estate
Humbly I worshipped, and yet hoped to prove
Thy grace in stooping had not been too great:

Thy life seemed set to secret music's strains,
Some far-off chime that thou alone couldst hear
Pulsing its music from those heavenly plains,
Too pure, too perfect for mine Earth-bound ear;

Come, from yon far-off worlds of glittering light,
Come, from remoter stars where seraphs reign,
Come thou to bless my longing, aching sight,
Stoop from thy heaven and give me heaven again:

Whence burns thy star amid yon glittering host
Or near or far, when in the dying night
The moon lies stranded on Morn's pallid coast,
A dream of day without its garish light:

"O give me tears or else my heart will break!"
I cry, and Silence mocks at my despair;
Tho' I in anguish pray to ease its ache
Chill Sorrow's finger stills the lips of Prayer:

VI.

Nay! Not all comfortless I walk alone,
Nor in that darkness blindly fall and grope;
God leads me in a path that is His own
And over Reason shines the Larger Hope:

If God be love then ours can never die,
For we are Love and Love is born of Him,
Fills this wide world, beyond our bending sky
Chants in the raptures of the Seraphim;

So, not with love that ends with mortal days
Not with the love that dies with mortal breath,
But with our souls attuned in Heaven's praise
I shall but love thee better after death.

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